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Sixth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1793 (2007), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) until 30 September 2008 and requested me to submit by 31 January 2008 a completion strategy for UNIOSIL that included a 20 per cent staff reduction by 31 March, a continued mission at 80 per cent of the original strength until 30 June and the termination of the UNIOSIL mandate by 30 September 2008. The Council also requested me to submit specific proposals on the mandate, structure and strength of the post-UNIOSIL office in my report of April 2008. The present report provides an update on the progress made by the mission in implementing its mandate since my last report on Sierra Leone, dated 4 December 2007 (S/2007/704), presents further information on the completion strategy of UNIOSIL and sets out my proposals on the mandate, structure and strength of the post-UNIOSIL office.

II. Major developments

Political situation

2. During the reporting period, the Government of Sierra Leone continued to make commendable efforts to implement its agenda for peace consolidation and economic recovery. On 12 and 13 January, the President, Ernest Bai Koroma, convened his first presidential retreat for Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and other key government officials at Bumbuna, Tonkolili District, in the Northern Province, to discuss his vision and strategies for moving the country forward through an agenda for change. The President focused on six priority areas: energy and water supply; transportation by road, air and water; youth unemployment; economic growth sectors, including agriculture, mining, fisheries and marine resources, and tourism; social services, including education, health care and housing; and capacity development in the public and private sectors, in local government and in the justice system. At the conclusion of the retreat, it was agreed that each Minister would enter into a contractual agreement with the President which would allow the Minister's performance in meeting agreed targets to be monitored and assessed by the President on a periodic basis. These contracts have since been signed.

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3. Political tension between supporters of the All People's Congress party (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) continues to be a concern. At the conference of its national executive council, held on 11 and 12 January, SLPP adopted a 10-point resolution, in which, inter alia, it called on the Government to immediately dissolve the National Electoral Commission and remove the Chairperson before the local council elections to be held on 5 July. It also condemned what it described as the continued "intimidation, harassment and molestation" of SLPP members and the dismissal of public officials perceived to be supporters of SLPP by the APC Government.

4. On 13 February, the High Court of Sierra Leone dismissed the case brought by SLPP in December 2007, which challenged the decision of the National Electoral Commission to invalidate votes cast in 477 polling stations during the presidential run-off elections of 8 September. The High Court ruled that it had no jurisdiction under the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone to entertain any proceedings concerning the election of a president. SLPP has since signalled its intention to appeal against the decision of the High Court.

5. On 27 February, following the defacing of a life-size portrait of President Koroma by unidentified individuals in Bo Town in the Southern Province, a crowd of alleged APC sympathizers vandalized and looted the SLPP regional office in Bo and attempted to attack city council officials who had earlier questioned the legality of erecting the portrait in the centre of the town without their approval.

6. During the reporting period, President Koroma held meetings with the SLPP minority leader in Parliament, included SLPP members in his delegation for official visits abroad and undertook reconciliation visits to Kenema in the Eastern Province and Bo in the Southern Province, areas that are generally considered to be SLPP strongholds.

7. On 5 April, the National Electoral Commission announced that APC had won all four seats in the parliamentary by-elections of 29 March, which were held to fill vacancies that had arisen following the appointment of the incumbents to ministerial positions. All four incumbents had been elected in the parliamentary elections of July 2007 on the APC ticket. Although voter turnout was low (24.8 per cent), the by-elections were well organized and ran smoothly.

III. Security situation

8. The security situation in Sierra Leone has remained relatively calm. The main threats to stability include the high numbers of unemployed young people, poor economic and social conditions, exacerbated by the rising price of food commodities and gasoline, and unresolved political and ethnic tensions. The security situation along the borders with Liberia and Guinea remains generally stable. However, the territorial dispute between Sierra Leone and Guinea over the border town of Yenga is still not settled. The Government of Sierra Leone has expressed its commitment to resolving this issue through dialogue.

IV. Reform of the security sector

A. Sierra Leone police

9. UNIOSIL continued to work with the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) to strengthen the Sierra Leone police by providing training, mentoring, management development, and technical and policy advice to the police. During the reporting period, the mission supported training activities designed to enhance and strengthen the institutional capacity of the Sierra Leone police in crowd control and public order management in preparation for the local council elections on 5 July. The mission also supported and mentored the Sierra Leone police election planning secretariat in the development and implementation of a security operational plan and budget for the parliamentary by-elections of 29 March. It is currently helping the Sierra Leone police to develop a security operational plan and budget for the local council elections of 5 July.

10. UNIOSIL supported the police in developing and organizing a two-week traffic management training workshop for 115 Sierra Leone police officers and traffic wardens from 11 to 22 February. Participants received training on the revised Road Traffic Act, as well as on police procedures for traffic investigations and managing traffic congestion, community-based approaches to traffic management, police ethics and professional standards. The mission also assisted with the pre-deployment training of 20 Sierra Leone police officers, including three women, who are now serving with the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur. This is the largest contingent of Sierra Leone police officers to participate in a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

11. In February, the Sierra Leone police released the results of the 2007 perception survey, which was a collaborative project of the Sierra Leone police and the United Kingdom-supported Justice Sector Development Programme. The survey indicated that there has been considerable improvement in community satisfaction with police performance in crime prevention and safety since 2006.

12. In February, the Sierra Leone police also released its crime statistics report for 2007, which indicated that, while reported cases of crime had decreased, serious felonies such as robbery with violence, rape and murder had increased. To strengthen the capacity of the Sierra Leone police to address this trend, the Justice Sector Development Programme and UNIOSIL assisted the police to develop and implement a training programme for senior and middle-level managers in criminal investigations and crime intelligence, and for doctors in forensic pathology. The two-year training programme, which began in March, is being funded by DFID.

B. Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

13. UNIOSIL continued to support the efforts of the United Kingdom, through the International Military Advisory and Training Team and DFID, to reform and restructure the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces. It also liaised with the armed forces to report on the security situation in the country and to make recommendations concerning external and internal security threats.

14. Following a comprehensive review undertaken by the Ministry of Defence with the support of the International Military Advisory and Training Team, the Government of Sierra Leone approved a further reduction of the armed forces, from

10,500 to 8,500 troops, to be completed by 2010. On 12 March, the Minister of Defence announced that the reduction would be achieved through a process of retrenching those who had been wounded in combat, those who are mentally and chronically ill, as well as those who have either reached the retirement age of 55 years or who voluntarily retire. In the event that the ceiling of 8,500 troops is still not reached, compulsory retirement procedures would be implemented. He also indicated that personnel made redundant would be offered job skills training.

15. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces continued to face serious financial and logistical challenges, including the inadequate supply of fuel and lubricants to operate vehicles and generators. In addition, military personnel and their families are still living in overcrowded, substandard conditions at the main barracks in Freetown, with limited access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation. Efforts are currently being made to upgrade the three military barracks in Freetown with funds provided by the Peacebuilding Fund.

16. UNIOSIL is working with the Sierra Leone police and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces to enhance gender mainstreaming in both institutions in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and to develop and strengthen the policy and procedures relating to sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse in the work place. The mission's activities include supporting the development of policy guidelines and a code of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as providing training to enhance the capacity of police and military personnel to address incidents of sexual assault, domestic violence, physical assault, and cruelty to children.

V. Preparations for local council elections on 5 July

17. Preparations are continuing for the local council elections to be held on 5 July. The elections will cover the five city councils of Freetown, Bo, Kenema, Koidu-New Sembehun and Makeni, the Bonthe Township Municipal Council, and 13 district councils. During the reporting period, the National Electoral Commission completed a staff restructuring exercise and appointed three new electoral commissioners.

18. UNIOSIL continued to provide technical assistance to the National Electoral Commission for the local council elections. A United Nations electoral assistance team is currently assisting the Commission in the planning of its electoral operations, the updating and exhibiting of the voter register, procurement of election materials, the review of the electoral legal framework, procedures and training programmes. With the assistance of a United Nations boundary delimitation expert, the Commission also completed the demarcation of 394 wards for the elections.

19. All funds required for the local council elections, estimated at $24.8 million, have either been pledged or received from donors. DFID, which was the largest single donor, made a pledge of £5.5 million, while the European Union pledged €3.7 million, Irish Aid €1 million, Denmark €389,000 and Japan $700,467. The Government has already provided $1.3 million of its $3.2 million pledge. Meanwhile, the United States Agency for International Development is providing financial assistance to both the National Electoral Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission, which is responsible for regulating the activities of political parties.

VI. Economic sector

20. The economic situation in the country remains fragile. During the reporting period, there were significant increases in the global price of food and gasoline, which directly affected the price of those commodities in Sierra Leone. This has placed a considerable strain on the country's already fragile economy, since almost 70 per cent of the rice consumed in the country is imported. The Government has promised to work towards achieving self-sufficiency in rice production by 2010.

21. While the Government has taken some measures to expedite the economic recovery process, including by enhancing dialogue with its development partners, a substantial injection of foreign investment is required to enable the Government to fulfil its campaign promise of turning the economy around within three years.

22. During the reporting period, the Government focused on improving the supply of electricity in the country. With the assistance of its international partners, the Government obtained $45 million to carry out work on the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Project, which on its completion would significantly increase the supply of electricity throughout the country. The project is expected to be completed by December 2008. In the meantime, in February, the Government commissioned a 10 megawatt station in Freetown, which has boosted the supply of electricity in the city.

23. A mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) visited Sierra Leone from 20 February to 4 March to review the country's performance under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and to discuss an economic programme for 2008. The IMF mission noted that, while domestic output growth had risen by 6.8 per cent, it was still below the projected growth rate of 7.4 per cent. The mission advised the Government to increase the pace of implementation of its structural reforms, which include modernizing the National Revenue Authority, adopting a strategy to reform the financial sector and strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission.

VII. Social sector

24. On 22 February, during a visit to Sierra Leone, the United Kingdom Secretary of State for International Development announced that DFID would provide £32 million over a five-year period for infrastructural improvements to water supply, sanitation and hygiene education in the country.

25. On 29 February, President Koroma launched the Reproductive and Child Health Strategic Plan for 2008 to 2010, which aims at reducing the current maternal, under-5 and infant mortality rate by 30 per cent by 2010. In support of the Plan, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization in Sierra Leone have jointly developed a programme that covers immunization, basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric care, and the prevention and management of malnutrition.

26. The plan for launching the Child Rights Act adopted by Parliament in June 2007 has been finalized and an advocacy meeting to mobilize partners around the implementation of the plan is scheduled for the second quarter of 2008. In the meantime, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and

Children's Affairs in developing minimum standards of care and protection for homes for orphans and vulnerable children.

27. Preparations have been completed to conduct a census of teachers, which will form the basis for developing a teacher-training policy. With the assistance of UNICEF, the Ministry of Education is in the process of conducting a study on "out-of-school" children to identify barriers preventing children of school-going age from attending and completing their primary schooling. The study will also focus on potential strategies for ensuring that 30 per cent of the children who are currently out of school are enrolled.

VIII. Enhancing democratic governance

28. During the reporting period, the United Nations provided support to the Government's efforts to enhance democratic governance in three key sectors: the legislative and electoral sector, the public sector and the justice sector. Programmatic support to each of these sectors focused on both institutional and structural capacity development. The United Nations also supported the Government in its efforts to decentralize its authority, review the 1991 Constitution and combat corruption.

A. Support to Parliament

29. UNIOSIL and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with other international partners, facilitated the establishment of a working group to coordinate technical and capacity-building support to Parliament to strengthen its oversight role and to sensitize Members of Parliament on their role in a democratic dispensation.

30. The United Nations is also working with Parliament and other key stakeholders, including the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to develop a comprehensive coordinated capacity development programme for parliamentarians. During the reporting period, UNIOSIL and UNDP, in collaboration with other development partners, organized basic induction training for new Members of Parliament on their legislative, representative and oversight functions, as well as training in budgeting and financial appropriations. In addition, UNIOSIL, in coordination with civil society representatives, is organizing seminars on the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives and on mining legislation. During the reporting period, UNDP donated office equipment, including computers, scanners, digital photocopiers and printers, to Parliament.

B. Support to the reform of the public sector

31. During the presidential retreat referred to in paragraph 2 above, the President identified the comprehensive restructuring of the public sector, especially the civil service, as one of his key priorities. The President has appointed a Director for Public Service Reform who reports directly to him. Moreover, with the assistance of UNDP, the Government is in the process of establishing a Strategy and Policy Unit in the President's Office, which will function both as a think tank and as the technical operational arm of the Presidency on strategic and policy planning issues. It will also work closely with the Public Sector Reform Unit in implementing the Government's public sector reform agenda.

C. Support to developing the capacity of the justice sector

32. The capacity of the justice sector institutions is being built gradually. On 19 February, President Koroma launched the Sierra Leone Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan for 2008 to 2010, which focuses on creating safe communities, providing access to justice, strengthening the rule of law and improving the delivery of justice. The Justice Leadership Group, comprising the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Chief Justice, has been given overall responsibility for the implementation of the strategy. In addition, a Justice Sector Coordination Office has been established in the Ministry of Justice to facilitate the day-to-day implementation of the strategy.

33. During the period under review, UNDP supported the Government's efforts to increase access to justice throughout the country by setting up temporary courts to assist in clearing long-outstanding cases. It also helped to refurbish and equip court facilities.

D. Support to anti-corruption efforts

34. With the assistance of DFID, the Anti-Corruption Commission has developed a strategic workplan. It has also established a Department of Investigation, Intelligence and Prosecution and relocated anti-corruption prosecutors from the Office of the Attorney General to the Commission.

35. During the presidential retreat referred to in paragraph 2 above, the Chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission advised the participants that the Commission had developed a three-pronged approach of prevention, education and prosecution to address corruption. He underlined the importance of obtaining declarations of assets from public officials, monitoring the procurement process and ensuring transparency in the conduct of Government business. He also highlighted the importance of enacting legislation that would give the Commission power to prosecute corruption cases and of the importance of sensitizing the public about fighting corruption.

36. On 27 February, the Cabinet approved a new national anti-corruption strategy, following a comprehensive review process, which was supported by UNIOSIL and other international partners. A unit has been established within the Anti-Corruption Commission to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategy. Despite the progress made, the Anti-Corruption Commission continues to suffer from severe personnel, financial and logistical deficiencies. A human resource needs assessment is currently being carried out, with the support of DFID, to determine the needs of the Commission.

37. On 17 April, the Commission arrested the former Ombudsman, Francis Gabbidon, for alleged offences under the Anti-Corruption Act of 2000 during his tenure as Ombudsman from 2000 to 2007. He has since been released on bail.

E. Devolution of power and decentralization

38. Some progress was made in implementing the Government's decentralization programme and in devolving power to the local councils in the districts. However, the Government still needs to conduct a comprehensive review of the Local Government Act of 2004 and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the chiefdom administrations and local councils. The local councils also require assistance in

building their capacities to carry out their work effectively and efficiently, and in mobilizing and managing public resources.

F. Constitutional review

39. On 10 January, the Constitutional Review Commission established by the Government submitted its report to President Koroma. The Commission proposed 136 amendments to the 1991 Constitution, 15 of which are amendments to "entrenched" provisions that will require approval by national referendum. Regrettably, several recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and provisions relating to the protection and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms were not included.

IX. Human rights and the rule of law

40. Considerable progress has been made in promoting respect for human rights, particularly in building the capacity of the national Human Rights Commission to monitor, protect and promote human rights and to review the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. With support from UNIOSIL and UNDP, the Human Rights Commission has established fully functioning offices, recruited some core staff, completed a brainstorming retreat for the development of a five-year strategic plan, developed rules of procedure for the handling of complaints and created a framework for the production of its first human rights report. It is also in the process of finalizing its administrative and human resource manual, as well as its financial policies. During the reporting period, the Commission received and investigated 70 complaints with the support of the United Nations.

41. Some progress was also made in building the capacity of State institutions to address the root causes of the conflict. Several training programmes on human rights, the rule of law, women and children, and the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were conducted by UNIOSIL for representatives of civil society and officials of key Government ministries, including local government.

42. Notwithstanding these positive developments, a number of challenges remain to the full realization of human rights. The justice system and the response of the Government to sexual and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, rape, and female genital mutilation, are still weak. The impunity with which these abuses are committed continues to pose a threat to the basic human security of women. In addition, during the reporting period, little progress was made in reducing the excessive number of adjournments and remand of cases and prolonged pretrial detentions, or in strengthening the prosecutorial capacity of the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the practice of hiring judges on contract with higher compensation packages than salaried judges continued. Many courts continue to be understaffed and underequipped. There are now 19 magistrates and 13 State counsels.

43. The Presidential Task Force set up to review and make recommendations to address the problems being experienced by the justice sector submitted its report to President Koroma on 25 January. It recommended, inter alia, the adoption of legislation for the control of drugs and dangerous substances, the establishment of

fast track courts for commercial and land cases, and the establishment of an accounting system within the judiciary.

44. Although the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been widely disseminated, implementation of its recommendations remains slow. While some recommendations, such as the adoption of the Gender Act and the Child Rights Act, have been implemented, a number of key recommendations, including the reparation programme for war victims, the ratification and domestication of key international instruments, and the submission of country reports to international treaty bodies, have yet to be implemented.

X. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

45. The UNIOSIL Gender Task Force worked closely with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs to sensitize the public about, and develop a national workplan for, the recently enacted Gender Act. However, the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) has not yet been established, owing to the lack of financial resources and weak institutional capacity of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs.

46. UNIOSIL and the United Nations country team continued to focus on accelerating the process of women's empowerment in critical areas of national life in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). UNIOSIL supported several women's advocacy groups in evolving strategies for increasing women's participation in the electoral process. Moreover, in collaboration with the Political Parties Registration Commission, UNIOSIL continued to encourage political parties to promote gender equity and youth empowerment by increasing the number of women candidates in the local council elections of 5 July.

47. In further efforts to enhance the role of women in the political process, UNIOSIL convened a series of meetings with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, political parties, women parliamentarians, women groups and international partners to explore ways of increasing women's representation in the local council elections. As a result of the consultations, a national steering committee was established and a five-month workplan with benchmarks was produced. The workplan addressed four priority areas, including building the capacity of women parliamentarians, increasing the number of women in public offices, building the capacity of potential women candidates to participate in the local council elections and voter education. In close concert with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIOSIL has intensified efforts to raise donor funding for the implementation of the workplan.

XI. Public information/United Nations Radio

48. UNIOSIL continued to promote a culture of peace, dialogue and participation through a variety of outreach activities, including sensitizing the public about the mission's activities, providing on-the-job training for media practitioners, conducting press briefings and interviews with high-level United Nations officials and supporting activities commemorating official United Nations days.

49. A consortium of national and international stakeholders has been established to take over the assets of United Nations Radio following the departure of UNIOSIL. The consortium comprises the Independent Radio Network, Talking Drum Studio, the BBC World Service Trust, Fourah Bay College, including Radio Mount Aureol and Cotton Tree News, and the Hirondelle Foundation of Switzerland. The United Nations and the consortium are supporting the Government's efforts to transform the State broadcaster, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service, into an operationally autonomous national public service broadcaster with the ultimate goal of integrating the post-UNIOSIL independent public service radio with the restructured Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. The transformation will require a legal framework and at least two years of capital investment and training.

XII. Activities of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund

50. The Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework, which was adopted by the Government of Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission on 12 December 2007, was approved by the Cabinet in January. Since its adoption, the Commission has focused on obtaining support for the implementation of the commitments contained in the Framework, broadening the donor base for Sierra Leone, as well as initiating new activities and completing existing activities in peacebuilding priority areas. In February, the Governments of Sierra Leone and the Netherlands circulated joint advocacy letters encouraging all stakeholders to support the implementation of the Cooperation Framework either through existing programmes or by initiating new efforts.

51. UNIOSIL continued to provide support for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission by advising the Government on the implementation of its commitments as outlined in the Cooperation Framework and by facilitating regular meetings on the priority programmes of the Commission. UNIOSIL supported the planning and organization of meetings to mobilize assistance for the local council elections and the implementation of the emergency energy sector plan.

52. The Chairman of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration, Frank Majoor, the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, visited Sierra Leone from 21 to 25 April to prepare for the high-level stakeholders consultation to be held in New York on 19 May to generate support for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework.

53. With respect to the Peacebuilding Fund, some 47 per cent of the $35 million allocated to Sierra Leone has been committed through seven projects that were approved from May to July 2007. The implementation of three of the projects has been completed. They cover support to the National Electoral Commission, capacity-building for the Sierra Leone police and emergency support for the national security forces. Implementation of three of the four remaining projects is ongoing. They deal with support to the Human Rights Commission, support to a water and sanitation facility at the Wilberforce barracks in Freetown, and support to the judiciary in clearing a backlog of pending cases. Preparations are continuing for the implementation of the fourth project, the Youth Enterprise Development Project.

XIII. Support to the Special Court for Sierra Leone

54. UNIOSIL is continuing to provide logistical support to the Mongolian Guard Force protecting the Special Court for Sierra Leone. However, the mission is consulting with the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the Special Court on the arrangements for the handover of support responsibilities prior to the expiration of its mandate.

XIV. HIV/AIDS

55. The United Nations country team continued to provide technical and financial support to the Government's efforts to combat HIV/AIDS. On 22 April, the country team and development partners took part in a consultative meeting to strengthen coordination, alignment and harmonization of its support to the Government. Meanwhile, on 17 April, the National AIDS Council, which oversees the national response to AIDS, held its first meeting under the chairmanship of the President. Moreover, the National AIDS Secretariat has initiated a review of the National Strategic Plan on AIDS for 2006-2010.

XV. Personnel conduct and discipline

56. The Conduct and Discipline Unit of UNIOSIL continued to train and sensitize mission personnel on United Nations rules and regulations, as well as on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in compliance with the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. During the reporting period, no cases of sexual exploitation and abuse or misconduct were reported against UNIOSIL personnel.

XVI. Downsizing/drawdown of UNIOSIL

57. In my letter dated 31 January addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/63), I advised the Council that there would be a reduction of some 62 posts, representing 20 per cent of the authorized staffing complement of UNIOSIL, by 31 March. I am pleased to report that the reduction has been completed, bringing the staffing strength of UNIOSIL from 309 to 247 civilian staff. The reduction exercise involved 15 international personnel, 43 national staff and four United Nations Volunteers. UNIOSIL has also streamlined tasks within the affected components of the mission to ensure that it continues to effectively perform its remaining tasks.

58. Following the local council elections on 5 July, UNIOSIL will gradually reduce its remaining civilian staff through a process of attrition, including reassignment of personnel to other peacekeeping operations and expiration of staff contracts. It is estimated that 60 support personnel will be needed to complete the liquidation of UNIOSIL, which is expected to take place between October and December. Some substantive staff will also be required to ensure a smooth transition and handover from UNIOSIL to the follow-on office.

59. As indicated in my letter to the President of the Security Council, 5 of the 22 UNIOSIL police advisers will leave the mission between March and August. The remaining 17 police advisers will depart the mission by 30 September. There are currently 11 military liaison officers in UNIOSIL. These will be drawn down as follows: one officer in July, four officers in August and six officers in September.

XVII. United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

60. By its resolution 1793 (2007), the Security Council expressed its intention that, upon the expiration of its mandate, UNIOSIL should be replaced by a United Nations integrated political office, and requested me to submit specific proposals on the mandate, structure and strength of that office in the present report. Following consultations among the Department of Political Affairs, UNDP, the Peacebuilding Support Office, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Field Support, UNIOSIL, the United Nations country team and the Government of Sierra Leone, I would propose that UNIOSIL be succeeded in October by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) for an initial period of one year.

A. Mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

61. By its resolution 1793 (2007), the Council also expressed its intention that the successor office should focus on carrying forward the peacebuilding process, mobilizing international donor support, supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and Fund, and completing any residual tasks left over from the UNIOSIL mandate, in particular promoting national reconciliation and supporting the constitutional reform process. In this regard and in the light of the consultations among the various stakeholders referred to in paragraph 60 above, I would propose that UNIPSIL be mandated to assist the Government of Sierra Leone in, inter alia:

(a) Providing political support to national and local efforts for identifying and resolving tensions and threats of potential conflict, especially over political affiliation, ethnicity, and natural resources before the eruption of violence;

(b) Completing and consolidating good governance reforms, including anti-corruption instruments;

(c) Reviewing the 1991 Constitution and key legislation;

(d) Strengthening the justice sector, Parliament and key governance institutions;

(e) Supporting security sector reform;

(f) Promoting the more effective functioning of local government;

(g) Implementing the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund;

(h) Observing and analysing the human rights situation with a view to strengthening national human rights institutions and practices, including in the context of the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission;

(i) Sustaining and expanding efforts for the political and economic empowerment of youth and women, through building their capacity to participate in the peacebuilding processes and public decision-making, and to engage in cooperative economic enterprises;

(j) Supporting gender mainstreaming into peace consolidation efforts in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000);

(k) Assisting the Government in promoting collaboration and coordination among all relevant partners, including bilateral and multilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and regional and international organizations in ensuring the above;

(l) Promoting a culture of peace and dialogue, including by providing support to the envisaged independent public broadcasting station;

(n) Continuing close cooperation with other peace operations in the subregion in a collective effort to promote regional peace.

B. Structure and strength of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

62. It is proposed that UNIPSIL be headed by my Executive Representative, who would report both to the Department of Political Affairs in his capacity as my Executive Representative and to UNDP in his capacity as United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative. The Office would be led by the Department of Political Affairs, with the support of UNDP, in close consultation with the United Nations country team, the Peacebuilding Support Office and other relevant stakeholders.

63. The staffing strength of UNIPSIL should include my Executive Representative, 16 international Professional civilian staff, one military adviser and one United Nations police adviser. These 19 Professional officers should be assisted by 3 national administrative assistants, 24 operational support staff (16 international and 8 national) and 20 helicopter support staff (4 international and 16 national).

64. UNIPSIL would comprise a small front office to support my Executive Representative and three substantive sections focusing on the key areas of the mandate, namely peace and governance; human rights and the rule of law; and youth and gender empowerment.

65. The front office of my Executive Representative should include one principal political adviser (D-1) who would provide strategic analysis on internal and subregional political developments and sustain direct engagement with key national and international counterparts; one senior peacebuilding cooperation officer (P-5) who would support the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as the implementation of the priorities of the Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework and projects supported through the Peacebuilding Fund; one senior military adviser (P-5) who would advise on the military implications of internal and subregional political and security-related issues, serve as liaison with other peacekeeping and military presences in the region, advise the armed forces and liaise with the International Military Advisory and Training Team; and one senior police adviser (P-5) who would assist national counterparts in the development of capacities for countering the proliferation of organized crime and narcotics, establishing and

implementing accountability and oversight mechanisms, as well as professional standards, and ensuring gender and human rights sensitivity in the work of the security sector.

66. The senior military adviser would be assisted by one military adviser from a troop-contributing country, who would advise on the military implications of internal and subregional political and security-related issues, while the senior police adviser would be assisted by four United Nations police advisers from police-contributing countries, who would support national efforts towards the attainment of a professional police force.

67. In addition, the front office should include one public information officer (P-4) who would assist with the development of a media strategy, provide advice to national counterparts on media-related issues and assist with the transition from United Nations Radio to an autonomous public broadcasting corporation; one political affairs officer (P-4) who would monitor and analyse internal and subregional political trends and developments and draft all relevant documents, including reports and code cables; and one special assistant (P-3) who would assist my Executive Representative in the execution of his responsibilities, particularly his coordination efforts and his strategic engagement with national and international stakeholders and the United Nations Secretariat.

68. The Peace and Governance Section should include two peace and governance officers (one P-5 and one P-4) who would focus on building the capacities of national and local institutions and strengthening processes at the national and local levels for the peaceful resolution of recurring disputes, managing conflicts before they lead to violent tension and building multi-partisan consensus around critical national issues and policies through dialogue and inclusion.

69. The Human Rights and Rule of Law Section should include one human rights and rule of law officer (P-5) and one rule of law officer (P-4) who would focus on strengthening the rule of law, developing the capacity of the justice system, facilitating access to justice, advising on the constitutional review process and developing alternative means of dispute resolution. It would also include two human rights officers (one P-5 and one P-4) who would assist in strengthening national capacities for the protection and advancement of human rights, especially through building the capacities of the national Human Rights Commission, help the Government to formulate a national plan for human rights and to comply with its reporting obligations, and assist in issuing reports on the human rights situation in the country. In addition, OHCHR would provide 10 national officers who would be responsible for observing and analysing the human rights situation in the country and preparing regular public reports.

70. The Youth and Gender Empowerment Section should include one youth and gender empowerment officer (P-5), one gender officer (P-4) and one youth empowerment officer (P-4) who would focus on strengthening national capacities for the protection and advancement of the rights of women and young people, with particular emphasis on ensuring their inclusion and participation in national decision-making processes and programmes pertaining to peace consolidation. In addition, the gender officer would mainstream gender into the peace consolidation efforts of UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

71. In order to effectively fulfil its mandate, UNIPSIL should be structured so as to allow for the co-location of United Nations political and development personnel, who would utilize the joint resources of the integrated office and the United Nations country team to implement the mandate of UNIPSIL. This co-location would also permit the development of more coherent policies, more integrated resource mobilization activities and the joint implementation of United Nations programmes and initiatives.

72. The ability of UNIPSIL to effectively implement its mandate will be contingent on the availability of requisite logistical capacity and resources, including helicopter services, and operational support from the Department of Field Support. The helicopter service is particularly important given that local means of transport from the international airport at Lungi to the mainland in Freetown do not comply with international or United Nations standards. In addition, an air capacity for medical evacuation will continue to be an urgent requirement.

XVIII. Observations

73. UNIOSIL has made significant progress in supporting the efforts of the Government to consolidate peace in the country. It has assisted the Government in strengthening the capacity of the security sector, promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law, building the capacity of the National Electoral Commission to conduct elections and making arrangements for the handover of United Nations Radio. However, the country continues to experience political tension along ethnic and regional lines, a slow economic recovery rate, poor economic and social conditions and serious governance challenges, which if not carefully managed have the potential to derail the peace consolidation process.

74. The capacity-building support of UNIOSIL to the National Electoral Commission and to the security sector has contributed to enhancing the ability of these governance institutions to discharge their constitutional mandates. The approach of the Sierra Leone police to law enforcement is increasingly more professional and better coordinated. Moreover, UNIOSIL training and mentoring in crowd control has improved the capacity of the police to manage mass actions of civil disobedience, including student demonstrations and worker protests. As a result, it is steadily gaining the confidence and respect of the public. However, the police force still requires support from the international community to purchase equipment and upgrade its facilities throughout the country.

75. Significant progress has also been made in professionalizing the armed forces with the support of the United Kingdom, the International Military Advisory and Training Team, UNIOSIL and other donors. In order to safeguard these positive developments, improvements will need to be made to the living and working conditions of military personnel, as well as to the logistical support provided to the army.

76. The security situation in the country has continued to improve, owing to the increased capacity of the security sector. The commitment of the leaders of the Mano River Union countries to a peaceful resolution of the issues confronting them has also contributed to the prevailing stability in Sierra Leone and the subregion. I encourage the Government of Sierra Leone to continue to support efforts to revitalize the Mano River Union.

77. It is critical that the main political parties put aside their political differences in the interest of consolidating peace in the country. I call on the Government to provide leadership in promoting national reconciliation, broadening political dialogue and involving all citizens regardless of political affiliation, or ethnic and regional origin, in the national recovery and political processes.

78. The Government has continued to take steps to enhance political and economic governance in the country. It is heartening to see the level of support that has been provided by international partners to develop the capacity of Parliament and the justice sector, and to further the Government's anti-corruption efforts. The assistance of the international community will continue to be needed as the Government pursues its decentralization, constitutional review and public sector reform efforts.

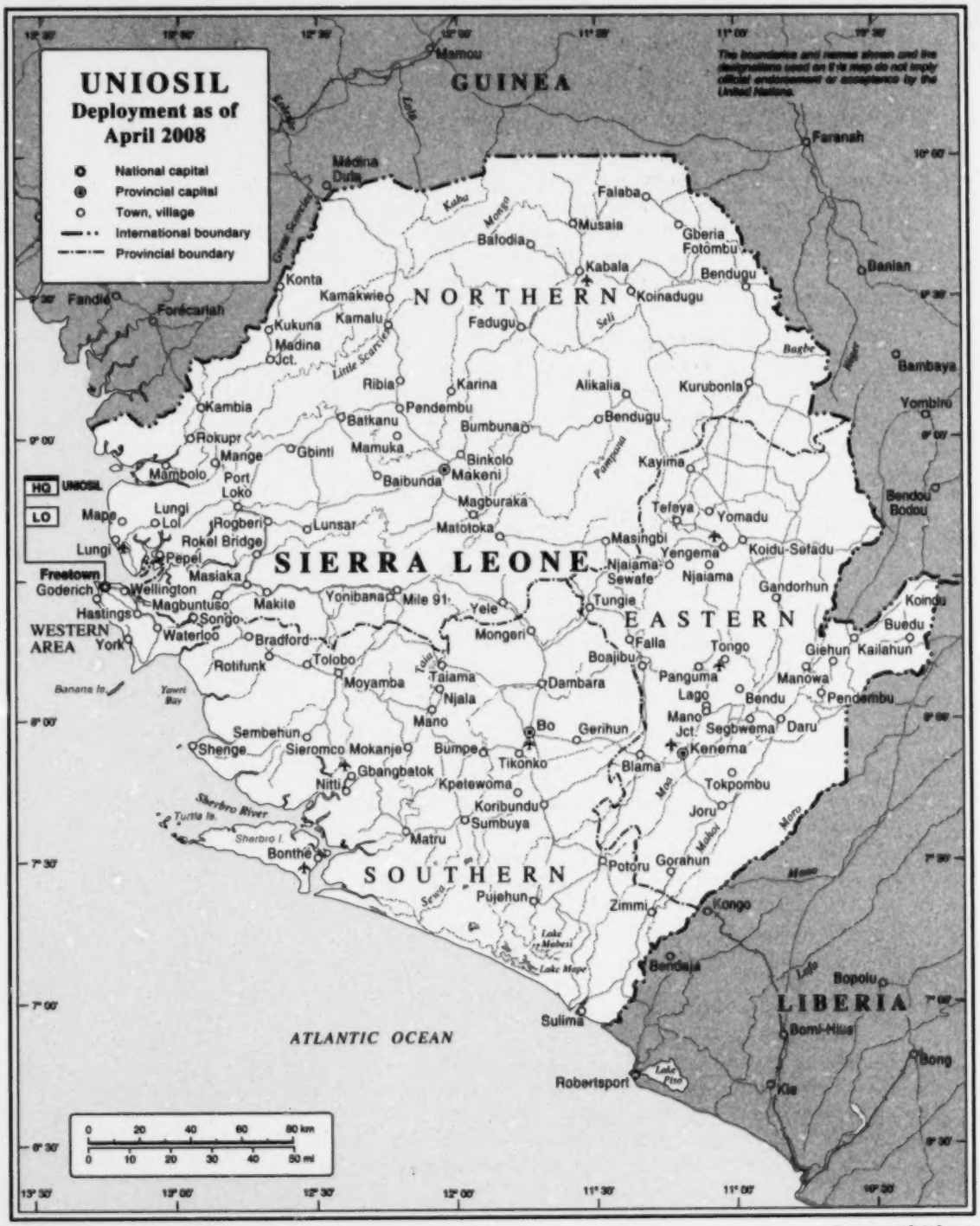
79. The engagement of Sierra Leone with the Peacebuilding Commission constitutes a vital source of enhanced external assistance and I would encourage the Government to collaborate closely with the Commission in the continued identification and implementation of projects that would have a positive impact on economic recovery and overall peace consolidation.

80. Preparations for the local council elections are advancing. The completion of the delimitation of wards and the redemption of substantial donor pledges to the election budget have ensured the timely completion of the major tasks associated with the elections. I wish to commend the Government for taking prompt steps to fulfil its financial obligations to the electoral process.

81. Respect for human rights, particularly political and civil rights, has increased. In addition, some progress has been made in legislating women's and children's rights. Notwithstanding these developments, the rule of law sector still faces serious challenges, which will continue to require the support of the international community.

82. Following the withdrawal of UNIOSIL in September, the sustained commitment of the United Nations will continue to be required in Sierra Leone. The establishment of a United Nations integrated peacebuilding office, which holistically addresses the political, economic and peacebuilding challenges facing the country, will be a significant channel of continuing international support for peace consolidation in Sierra Leone. I therefore recommend that the Security Council approve the establishment of UNIPSIL for an initial period of one year with the mandate, structure and strength set out in paragraphs 61 to 72 of this report.

83. In conclusion, I wish to commend the Government of Sierra Leone and its partners for creating an environment conducive to increased cooperation, and to express my deep appreciation to the personnel of UNIOSIL and the United Nations country team in Sierra Leone for their important contribution to the peace consolidation process in Sierra Leone. My appreciation also goes to all those countries contributing police and military personnel to UNIOSIL, the Economic Community of West African States, bilateral and multilateral donors, international partners and non-governmental organizations for their generous contributions and sustained support to the cause of peace in Sierra Leone.



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